

# FINAL FANTASY XIII REMINISCENCE ~Tracer of Memories~

## Chapter 5 - Snow Villiers

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Aoede waits at a run-down bus stop, next to a highway...

Aoede waits at a run-down bus stop, next to a highway in the middle of nowhere. She looks at the green fields all around her, and thinks that while the countryside may be a boring place for most everyone else, the lack of action is probably what Snow likes about it, after having fought in "that other world" for so long. Aoede knows she could have made an appointment in town, but Snow enjoys riding his motorcycle on this stretch of road, and Aoede felt that it would be a good place to hear his story. Presently Snow and his motorcycle comes into view, and he stops by the bus stop to inform Aoede that she won't have any luck catching a bus; the line's been abandoned for some time now.

**Aoede:** "Not a problem. I was waiting for you."

**Snow:** "...You don't look like a hitchhiker."

**Aoede:** "I heard about you from Serah Farron."

At this, Snow cuts his engine and they move under the shelter of the bus stop to talk. Aoede tells Snow everything she's learned so far, and at the end of her story Snow agrees to tell her everything she wants to know, because anyone who has Serah's trust has his trust too. Snow then relates his story from the beginning; when he gets to the part where Serah dies, he falls silent, and Aoede, sensing that it must be a painful memory for him even with Serah alive now, quickly changes the subject, asking to hear about the age of Chaos.

Snow continues with his story in LR, and we find out that right after the Chaos began taking over the world, everyone took shelter in the man-made Cocoon, the Ark in the sky. Hope, with his charisma, naturally became the leader, and the Conseil de Renaissance (\*French for Council of the Rebirth?) was established. Hope was the brains in charge of the big picture, while Noel, Snow and Sazh (who flew about in his airship), dealt with the monsters. But, as it turned out, mankind not being able to age became the bigger problem. Aoede had already guessed that at

some point everyone must have been immortal, because some of the people she interviewed claimed to have lived for hundreds of years, but Snow corrects her: they weren't immortal, it was still possible to die, and with no children being born humanity was doomed to extinction, something the Conseil de Renaissance did their best to prevent.

**Snow:** "Things were going downhill. The lands we could live in were consumed by the Chaos, little by little, and even "Bhunivelze", up in the sky, couldn't escape the damage."

**Aoede:** "Bhunivelze" – I keep hearing this word, but what does it mean?"

**Snow:** "It's the name of the Cocoon we made. And also the name of God, our biggest enemy."

**Aoede:** "Huh...?"

**Snow:** "I'll get back to that later. Anyway, the manmade Cocoon began to show wear and tear, and we knew it wasn't going to be able to shelter us forever. This was when Fal'cie-Pandemonium showed up. It sprang into action and began working at great speed on the lands outside of our Cocoon."

**Aoede:** "What kind of action do you mean?"

**Snow:** "This was a Fal'cie that made things. It began cultivating the lands beside the sea and building homes for people to live in, even though no one asked it to. In no time at all it built something like a city, and then another one a little ways apart from the first. The first eventually became known as Luxerion, and the second became the foundation for Yusnaan."

**Aoede:** "So everyone in the manmade Cocoon moved into the cities the Fal'cie built."

**Snow:** "Not at first, we were suspicious and stayed away from it for a long time. You can't trust Fal'cies, and there wasn't a message or anything either. While we stayed on the alert and waited to see what it would do next, the Fal'cie began its next course of action. It built a plant in Yusnaan and established a supply chain. Food, fuel, the works. The Fal'cie didn't say anything, but it was trying to bait us, all right – "Leave your manmade Cocoon and come here", you could almost hear it say."

Snow explains that it was a difficult decision to make; after years of debate, the Conseil de Renaissance decided on the exodus to the lands outside; their reasoning being that if everyone continued to live inside the Cocoon, already deteriorating from the effects of the Chaos, nobody would live for very long. Also, the man-made Cocoon formed the core of all their technology, so if it were to suddenly stop working it would spell disaster for mankind. Having everyone move outside and gradually learn to feed and shelter themselves, while also making use of Fal'cie-Pandemonium's supplies, was their best bet at protecting Cocoon and the technology inside.

**Snow:** "We relied on the Fal'cie to feed us, and it was like we were back to being livestock raised by the Fal'cie. And sending people out of the manmade Cocoon, even though it was still technically safe, into the world outside, that was like the Purge all over again, I thought. Still, there was no other way. We led the first expedition to the surface. We tried to be self-sufficient, so we wouldn't depend on the Fal'cie too much, and all the time we fought the Chaos. Every single day... it was a fight with no end, and for years that was how we lived."

**Aoede:** "Sounds like it would be easy to lose your sense of time living like that... I'm reminded of what Sazh said. He told me he fell into despair when Dajh wouldn't wake up, and wandered the lands for years."

**Snow:** "I wanted to help the old man, but there was nothing I could do... It was the same for me. I couldn't see a future, and I didn't know how to save Serah, or where Lightning was. Every day was a nightmare. Noel was trapped in his despair too. He blamed himself for what happened to Serah, and the mess the world turned into, and couldn't get over it. He shouldn't have, because he didn't do anything wrong."

**Aoede:** "And how was Hope doing?"

**Snow:** "He was brilliant. He looked for a way to stop the Chaos, and never complained, not even once. I was able to keep it together and do my best because he never abandoned hope. It's just like how his parents named him, he was "Hope" itself. He was our – no, you may think I'm exaggerating, but he was the hope for all mankind. And because of that... he was removed."

**Aoede:** "By "removed", do you mean... how Hope was "spirited away", and disappeared without a trace? I heard from Sazh that Hope's disappearance was what caused the world to change."

**Snow:** "He suddenly disappeared, and the Conseil de Renaissance fell into disarray. There were debates, all right, but no decisions were being made. I tried to restore order... but I was no Hope. There was fighting between factions and petty squabbles began to eat away at the fabric of our society. Everyone was on edge. Around that time, I was responsible for the manufacturing plant at Yusnaan, and it took all I had to stop a war over the supplies from erupting."

In the middle of all the confusion, the Conseil de Renaissance began to lose the confidence of the people, and in its place "the teachings" began to spread.

**Snow:** "It was the creed of the Glorious God. Even if the world ends, God will save you and lead you to a new world – this was the doctrine touted by the Order, which appeared around then."

**Aoede:** "I've heard of the Order in my investigations."

**Snow:** "You must have, the number of believers in the Order kept increasing, and as an organization they began to exert control over society. As for the name of the God they worshipped... go on, take a guess."

**Aoede:** "...Bhunivelze."

**Snow:** "Panic began to spread after Hope disappeared, and those in despair clung to Bhunivelze's teachings in hopes of salvation. You see now why Hope was "spirited away", don't you? Bhunivelze was the one who erased Hope. God took "hope" away so he could capture the hearts of men."

**Snow:** "The Order was after a monopoly of all the supplies. I wasn't about to let them do that, but at the same time I didn't want to have men fighting each other. On the surface, I pretended to concede to the Order's authority, and they gave me the title of "Patron". But I had them agree to two conditions: Yusnaan was to remain independent, and the Order had no business meddling in what goes on at the plant."

**Aoede:** "Sounds like you had a lot of politicking to do."

**Snow:** "Doesn't sound like the old me, right? Even a fool learns a few things after living a few hundred years."

Snow goes on to explain that as Patron of Yusnaan, he busied himself playing cat-and-mouse politics with the Order; there was so much work to be done that he had less and less time to meet up with Sazh and Noel, and eventually they no longer kept in touch. Some 150 years later, Vanille and Fang woke up and were taken into custody by the Order.

**Snow:** "Bhunivelze's hand was definitely behind that, too. Falcie-Pandemonium turning up, Hope going missing, everything was part of "God's Plan". And the finishing touch was the Saviour."

Snow explains that according to the teachings of the Order, the Saviour purifies the souls of men and leads them to the new world.

**Aoede:** "What do they mean when they say the soul is purified?"

**Snow:** "It means you forget everything. "The people who have died, your past memories – let's forget them all and

be reborn into the new world!”. ”

**Aoede:** “In that case... the reason why we can’t recall our memories from “that other world”, that’s because our souls have been purified, isn’t it? In the process of being reborn from that other world with the Cocoon, to this planet here, the Saviour, she...”

Snow waits for Aoede to finish, and Aoede, thinking she’s finally hit upon the truth, asks:

“Lightning erased our feelings and memories, didn’t she?”

There’s an edge in Snow’s look for a brief moment, but the tension disappears at once, and Snow informs Aoede that she has come to the wrong conclusion; Lightning fought Bhunivelze so that everyone could hold on to their memories, and Aoede herself is proof of that.

**Aoede:** “Me?”

**Snow:** “Your memories didn’t disappear, you just couldn’t remember them properly. And you recovered your memories in the process of interviewing us, didn’t you?”

**Aoede:** “True, but... in that case I’m all the more confused. I began my investigations hoping to learn the truth behind my vague memories, but after meeting all of you, and getting back my memories of that world, I now have a different set of questions... what is this world I currently live in? Why did the world turn out this way? Now I think the real purpose of my mission is to find out the answer to this.”

**Snow:** “Hey, so you do know what you’re doing. after all. Any doubts you have, you have to figure out the answer for yourself – that’s the path you’ve chosen, after all.”

Snow assures Aoede she’ll have her answers once she meets Lightning; Aoede asks Snow for Lightning’s location, but Snow dodges this by saying:

“No can do, there’s an order to things, ya know? You try barging in on Lightning and lobbing your questions at her, just like that, out of the blue. She’s real scary, she’ll send you running.”

Aoede suspects Snow of not actually knowing Lightning is, but she also doesn’t think he’s one to lie for no good reason.

**Aoede:** “Well, thanks for the warning. She sounds like a difficult person. I don’t know if she’ll even hear me out if I get to meet her.”

**Snow:** “Don’t worry. Don’t just ask questions, let her know how you feel too. She’ll answer that, I’m sure.”

**Aoede:** “My... feelings?”

**Snow:** “That’s how I was too. I held back and wasn’t able to trust Lightning when she returned as the Savior. So I took out my feelings on her, and that was how we understood each other.”

Aoede tries to think of what she wants to tell Lightning, but draws a blank. Snow then arranges for Aoede to meet Noel.

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